



Web Visibility – Making your Company Visible on the Internet

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Just as you want to be listed in the phone book, you want your business listed on the internet. A few simple steps can make sure that your customers can easily find you on the web, most at no cost.

The first step is to get a domain name. If you are still using email @aol.com or @sbcglobal.com, it is time to get your own internet domain. It will cost you about \$15/ Month to have your own email @yourdomain.com and is well worth it. Even in Visalia, more and more customers expect you to be reachable on the internet. Part of your brand is your internet domain. Your email and web address should be on your business card. Have a web site, even if it only displays your address and phone number. This makes it easier to find you on the web.

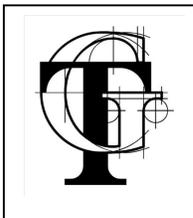
I suggest creating a separate email address for your business marketing if you do not have one already. This will allow you to redirect incoming marketing emails to a separate email account or folder easily. We use info@toriangroup.com and purchasing@toriangroup.com.

1. Make sure your information is current in Google local. Go to Google, and update the contact information for your business. It only takes a couple of minutes. <https://www.google.com/local/add/login?hl=en-US&gl=US> You will need to create a Google logon, if you do not have one already.
2. Look up your business in Yahoo! Local, and update it if it is not displaying accurate information. Go to <http://local.yahoo.com> and enter the name of your business. If you are not listed, go to: http://add.yahoo.com/fast/help/us/local/cgi_feedback and submit your company. If you are, click on the business name, to get details. A link just below the business description “own this business?” allows you to update your information and provide more details about your business. You will need to create a Yahoo! Logon account if you don’t already have one.
3. Get listed in DMOZ. This is the topical (edited by humans) directory used by many major search portals, including Google, AOL, Yahoo, and others. List your business by topic, and by regional, in Visalia. Instructions are here: <http://dmoz.org/add.html>. It can take a while to get listed, as it is reviewed by volunteers. I have volunteered and been accepted to edit the Visalia local section of the directory, to help speed things up for us.
4. Check your listing with the Chamber of Commerce. Go to www.visaliachamber.org/directory.asp and enter the name of your business. Contact Darlene at the chamber to update your listing. The directory will soon be upgraded with enhanced search, and listings will soon include a short description of your business, and your logo, as well as a web link.
5. MSN uses CitySearch. Check your listing here: <http://local.msn.com>. You can enhance your listing for a fee. <https://selfenroll.citysearch.com>.
6. Update your information with Dun & Bradstreet. This is free, but be prepared for some annoying marketing follow-up to the email and phone number you provide. <https://eupdate.dnb.com/requestoptions.asp> You will be assigned a DUNS number and a logon, after which you can provide them with information on your business.

7. Verizon Superpages provides a free listing here: <http://my.superpages.com/spweb/products/business-listing>. They require that you provide a credit card as part of the registration process for verification of identity.
8. For a list of additional directories you can be listed in, check the internet public library directory list: <http://www.ipl.org/div/subject/browse/ref80.00.00/> and the Google directory list: http://www.google.com/Top/Reference/Directories/Address_and_Phone_Numbers/ A little searching may turn up some market specific directories that will really help your business.
9. Make sure your listings with vendors are current. Often vendors provide a list of local dealers or outlets which you can be in. These are often published online.
10. Search Google, MSN, AOL, and Yahoo! for your full name, your last name, and your business name. You may be amazed at some of the information about you on the internet. Correct any errors where you can.
11. Find out who is linking to your website, and check to see what they say about you. You can search for inbound links on Google and Yahoo! by typing “link:http://www.yourcompany.com” in the search window. Be sure to include the http:// in the search URL. If your site has no inbound links, consider a link building campaign to get others to link to your site.

If you already have a web site, make sure it is optimized for searching. Talk to your web site developer to be sure that they are optimizing your site for the right keywords for your business. You can do a quick check by searching for your business using search terms you think your customers might use. More here: www.keywordworkshop.com/articles/2/1/Keyword-Research-Concepts .
www.webscale.com - Search engine view of your site.

If appropriate to your business, consider advertising on Google Adwords. Google offers a targeted marketing service which allows you to specify that your ad will be visible only to searchers within a particular distance from your company. Cost is based on the demand for the particular keywords used to search for your business. By selecting the right keywords, such as “your business name Visalia” you can advertise for almost nothing. You pay a few cents for each person who clicks on your ad, and can set a daily maximum cost. The ad will link to a particular page on your web site, which should be selected for relevance to the keywords you select.
www.google.com/intl/en/ads



Tim Torian teaches computer networking at the College of Sequoias. He has a BS in Computer Science, and has been consulting on computer networks for the past 25 Years. His industry certifications include: Cisco CCNA and CCNI, Microsoft MCSE, and Novell CNE. He is president of Torian Group, Inc. which provides a full range of Technology Consulting services to local business, including computer services, networking, and custom software development. They can be reached at (559) 733-1940 or on the web at www.toriangroup.com © Copyright Torian Group 2006